PROFESSIONAL SERVICES UNIT
BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS

Are you a UNISON member who is a registered professional member of any of these health and social care professional regulatory bodies listed below?

Health and Social Care Professional Regulatory Bodies in the UK

- Care Council for Wales (CCW)
- General Pharmaceutical Council (GPC)
- General Osteopathic Council (GOsC)
- General Optical Council (GOC)
- General Medical Council (GMC)
- General Dental Council (GDC)
- General Chiropractic Council (GCC)
- Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)
- Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC)
- Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)
- Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI)
- Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)

You may be entitled to be advised and represented by UNISON's Professional Services Unit (PSU) if:

- You face allegations that your fitness to practise is impaired OR
- You have applied for registration or renewal of your registration with one of these professional regulatory bodies but your application has been refused.

UNISON's PSU will only advise and represent you if you have been a UNISON member for at least 4 weeks **before** the alleged incident being complained about happened **AND** you have **no gaps** in your UNISON membership - it has been continuous.

IF YOU WANT TO RESIGN IT MUST BE AGREED, IN WRITING, BY A UNISON FULL TIME OFFICIAL, OR THE UNION'S SOLICITORS, BEFORE YOU CAN HAVE UNISON REPRESENTATION.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOUR PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BODY INFORMS YOU OF A COMPLAINT OR ALLEGATION THAT YOUR FITNESS TO PRACTISE IS IMPAIRED?

1. DO NOT DELAY! INFORM YOUR UNISON BRANCH RIGHT AWAY!
2. GIVE YOUR LOCAL UNISON REPRESENTATIVE COPIES OF:
   - All the correspondence and documents you receive from your professional regulatory body about the allegation against you.
   - all records or notes of your employer's disciplinary meetings/hearings about the allegation against you

REMEMBER **Anyone** can make an allegation that your fitness to practise is impaired and refer the allegation to your professional regulatory body at **any time**. **Do not delay! Inform your UNISON branch right away!**

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOUR PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BODY SENDS YOU A LETTER ASKING YOU TO RESPOND TO THEIR ALLEGATIONS ABOUT YOUR FITNESS TO PRACTISE?

1. You must immediately ask your UNISON branch to seek help from UNISON's Regional Office who will obtain advice and representation from UNISON's PSU to assist you with your response. **Do not reply to your regulatory body without obtaining advice from your UNISON branch.**

2. If your case has already been referred to UNISON's PSU and you receive correspondence from your professional regulatory body asking you for a response, or to complete any forms about their allegations, you must contact PSU at once for advice. **Do not reply to your regulatory body directly, seek advice from UNISON's PSU.**

IF YOU RECEIVE A LETTER FROM YOUR PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BODY INFORMING YOU OF ANY HEARING INCLUDING AN INTERIM ORDER HEARING ABOUT YOUR FITNESS TO PRACTISE:

1. Contact your UNISON branch immediately to ask the UNISON Region to send your case to UNISON's PSU for advice and representation do not ignore it! If you have been told that your case has already been sent to UNISON's PSU, contact PSU directly for advice and representation.
2. **Make sure you keep paying your UNISON subscription membership at the appropriate level.**

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3. **Attend all hearings of your professional regulatory body with your representative.**
4. Tell your branch if you receive a letter from the Disclosure & Barring scheme (DBS) or protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme asking you to write a response, as your branch and your region will help you with this.

PSU will help you with your response to DBS only if the Disclosure and Barring Service or Protection of Vulnerable Groups allegation is part of the fitness to practise allegation(s) against you. So please tell your PSU representative if it is.

YOUR UNISON BRANCH WILL:

1. Check that you are eligible for UNISON representation
2. Ask you to complete a UNISON PSU Case Referral form which includes UNISON's Terms of Representation which tells you what you should do to continue to be represented by UNISON and what you should expect from UNISON.
3. Send your case to the Regional Office for referral to UNISON's PSU
4. Pay reasonable expenses you have to enable you to attend hearings of the professional regulatory body. Your branch will also pay the reasonable expenses of any witnesses, agreed by PSU, who need to attend your hearing.
5. Pay for expert and/or medical reports which your PSU representative agrees is necessary for your case.

YOUR UNISON REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE WILL:

1. Check that you are eligible for UNISON advice and representation in line with UNISON rules
2. Ask you and the registration body to send the Region all the documents about the allegation.
3. Check that you have completed the UNISON PSU Case Referral form
4. Check and ask you to send UNISON all the correspondence and documents you receive from your professional regulatory body about the allegation.
5. Check and ask you to send to UNISON all records or notes of your employer's disciplinary meetings/hearings about the alleged incident(s)
6. Ask you to send to UNISON any other supporting evidence about the alleged incident for example supervision records, training records, employment records, reports about the alleged incident(s)
7. Confirm UNISON's Terms of Representation which tells you what you should do to continue to be represented by UNISON and what you should expect from UNISON
8. Send your case to UNISON's PSU for a case officer to advise and represent you.

YOUR UNISON PSU REPRESENTATIVE WILL:

1. Check that you are eligible for advice and representation
2. Analyse and assess the available evidence provided by the professional regulatory body and you to advise you whether the evidence is likely to prove or disprove the allegations against you
3. Confirm UNISON's Terms of Representation which tells you what you should do to continue to be represented by UNISON and what you should expect from PSU.
4. Advise and discuss with you about what matters you should address in your written response to the regulatory body's Investigating Committee
5. Advise and discuss with you what you should do when faced with full disciplinary hearings of your regulatory body including :
    a) Advising and assisting you with gathering evidence in support of your response to the allegations: for example obtaining your medical, employment, supervision or training records; obtaining the relevant service user, patient or client records.
    b) Advising you on which witnesses should be called to give evidence to support your case.
6. Advise and assist you with writing your witness statement for hearings
7. Represent you at all hearings of your professional regulatory body
8. Advise, discuss and identify with you any steps you could take to improve your practice or your conduct.

UNISON WILL ONLY CONTINUE TO REPRESENT IF YOU COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING TERMS:

- **You must continuously pay your UNISON subscription at the correct level**
- You provide UNISON with all facts and information relevant to your case
- you are open, frank and truthful with your representative about the facts of your case;
- you cooperate with the advice given by UNISON and the agreement reached on how we will proceed, including timescales for providing statements, documentary and other evidence;
- UNISON remains your sole representative. If you instruct representation from another party for any part of the fitness to practise proceeds, including your hearing UNISON will withdraw representation.

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Professional Services Unit, UNISON Centre